

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8371
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AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
USMISSION NATO
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

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E.O. 11652: EXGDS
TAGS: PINT, SP
SUBJECT: CHURCHMAN'S VIEW OF POST-REFERENDUM SCENE

REF: MADRID 9462

1. JOSE MARIA MARTIN PATINO (VICAR GENERAL OF THE MADRID ARCHDIOCESE AND PRINCIPAL ADVISER TO MADRID'S CARDINAL TARANCON) HAS EXCEPTIONAL ENTREE INTO THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM. HE MADE FOLLOWING POINTS IN CONFIDENCE TO EMBOFF ON DECEMBER 16.

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2. THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR WAS IN A STATE OF EUPHORIA ABOUT THE HIGHLY FAVORABLE OUTCOME OF THE REFERENDUM (REFTEL), THOUGH IT WAS OF COURSE TEMPERED BY THE SOBERING PROBLEM OF THE ORIOL KIDNAPPING. GIVEN THE MASSIVE GOVERNMENT PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN FIRST TO PARTICIPATE, AND SECOND, TO VOTE "YES," MARTIN PATINO

WAS NOT ALL THAT SURPRISED AT THE 94 PERCENT "YES" VOTE. HE HAD EARLIER CAUTIONED JUSTICE MINISTER LAVILLA AND INTERIOR MINISTER MARTIN VILLA, ABOUT WHAT HE THOUGHT WAS AN EXCESSIVELY HIGH-PRESSURE GOVERNMENT CAMPAIGN. THE GOVERNMENT, HOWEVER, HAD RUN SCARED, FEARING A MEDIOCRE TURN-OUT AND USED ELEMENTS OF THE FRANCOIST MACHINE (E.G. NATIONAL RADIO AND TV) TO WIN DEMOCRACY FOR SPAIN.

3. HE HAD CAUTIONED THE SOCIALIST PSOE THAT THEIR ABSTENTION PITCH COULD BE A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD. IF THE ABSTENTION RATE WAS HIGH, THEY COULD WELL AND GOOD CLAIM A LARGE CHUNK AS HAVING HEDED THEIR ADVICE. AS IT TURNED OUT, HOWEVER, THE MEAGER 23 PERCENT ABSTENTION MADE THE PSOE LOOK BAD. IF ONE ASSUMED THAT 10 TO 15 PERCENT OF THE 23 PERCENT ABSTENTION WAS DUE TO INDOLENCE ETC., THAT LEFT THE SOCIALISTS WITH THE IMAGE OF A PRETTY SLIM CONSTITUENCY. (WE NOTE THAT SOME SOCIALISTS REPORTEDLY DIDN'T HEED THEIR PARTY'S ADVICE, AND VOTED "YES".)

4. MARTIN PATINO WENT ON TO NOTE THAT THE REAL POLITICK-ING WOULD NOW START AS THE PARLIAMENTARY CAMPAIGN GOT INTO HIGH GEAR IN 1977. SPECULATING ABOUT AN EVENTUAL OUTCOME, HE THOUGHT SUAREZ--EVEN MORE POPULAR AFTER THE REFERENDUM VICTORY--LOOKED MORE THAN EVER A GOOD BET TO STAY ON AS THE FIRST PRIME MINISTER OF A NEW DEMOCRATIC REGIME.

5. MARTIN PATINO NOTED THAT A POSSIBLE POLITICAL VEHICLE FOR SUAREZ WAS IN THE MAKING. THE NEW PARTY WOULD BE CONFIDENTIAL

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CALLED "INDEPENDENT DEMOCRATS" AND THE NUCLEUS WOULD BE THE CURRENT SO-CALLED INDEPENDENT GROUP OF LIBERAL FRANCOIST CORTES MEMBERS. THE PRINCIPAL FIGURES WOULD INCLUDE INTERIOR MINISTER MARTIN VILLA AND NEWLY-APPOINTED BARCELONA MAYOR SOCIAS HUMBERT. SUCH A PARTY - NON-CONFESIONAL - WOULD BE ABLE TO FORGE AN ALLIANCE WITH THE POPULAR PARTY (CABANILLAS, ARIENZA, ET AL) AND COULD COME UP WITH A VERY RESPECTABLE SHARE OF THE VOTE, HE OPINED. (HE DID NOT INCLUDE THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS IN THIS ALLIANCE.) MARTIN PATINO THEN SKETCHED THE USUAL SCENARIO IN WHICH SUCH A CENTER BLOC WOULD ASK SUAREZ TO ASSUME THE PRESIDENCY OF A NEW GOVT. SUCH A GOVT WOULD INCLUDE AT LEAST ONE SOCIALIST MINISTER (PRESUMABLY, PSP).

6. FINALLY, THE CHURCHMAN ASSERTED THAT BECAUSE OF THE ORIOL KIDNAPPING, THE PCE WOULD NOW ALMOST CERTAINLY NOT BE LEGALIZED BEFORE THE ELECTIONS. STABLER

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